



## BRIEFS

### ENVIRONMENTAL GOLF'S CLAY PUTNAM RECEIVES GCSAA CERTIFICATION

CALABASAS, Calif. — Environmental Golf, a division of Environmental Industries, announced that regional manager Clay Putnam has been certified by the GCSAA. As regional manager, Putnam oversees maintenance operations at golf courses throughout the Northeastern and Great Lakes regions. The Ohio State University graduate holds a degree in turf management. "Clay has demonstrated dedication and a willingness to expand his horizons by pursuing one of the highest levels of professional development in his career," said Dave Hanson, senior vice president of Environmental Golf.



### RMRTA CALLS FOR NOMINATIONS

DENVER — The Rocky Mountain Regional Turfgrass Association has announced the opening for nominations for the 2001 Distinguished Service Award and the 2001 Turfgrass Professional of the Year. The awards will be presented at the RMRTA's annual conference and trade show held here at the Colorado Convention Center, Dec. 5-7, 2001. The DSA recognizes individuals for long standing service in the turf industry whereas the turfgrass professional honor acknowledges outstanding contributions to the industry by an individual during the past year. The deadline for nominations is Oct. 19, 2001.

### PRITCHETT JOINS PALMER GOLF

ORLANDO, Fla. — Arnold Palmer Golf Management has named Walter Pritchett as superintendent of the Cardinal Club at the University of Louisville in Louisville, Ky. The hiring of Pritchett comes in anticipation of the club's opening this month. The new facility is a joint venture between Palmer Golf and the University Clubs of America. The Cardinal Club is the fourth alumni-themed club in operation and the third club to open this year. Pritchett previously served as the superintendent for the River Bend Links in Robinsonville, Miss.

GOLF COURSE NEWS

### EDITORIAL FOCUS: Winter Preparation

## Seed companies release new varieties for winter overseeding

By JOEL JOYNER

CORVALLIS, Ore. — This fall, new introductions will be breaking into the winter overseeding market offering golf course superintendents a salt tolerant ryegrass, improved seed blends, and higher quality turfgrasses.

The goal for golf course superintendents, particularly those below the transition zone, is to present a playing surface that's both attractive and enticing to golfers as Bermudagrass goes dormant.

The overseeding market, therefore, is a lucrative one for seed companies, and new products this year aim to bring value to golf courses and golfers alike. Although most seed companies primarily focus on permanent turf, they also have been looking at new ways to ease the golf course superintendent's seasonal challenge to accommodate golfers.

### SEED RESEARCH OF OREGON

SR 4500 is the newest perennial ryegrass to be released this year from SRO. "It's going to work better for super-



Skip Lynch

ern end of the overseeding market, it may hang in there a little too long. It has a high endophyte and offers a fairly dark green color. It's a good looking grass with lots of tillers."

A lot of companies sell individual seed components to allow superintendents to make their own blends. SRO has taken that additional step out of the process by offering their own new blends of Champion Fine and Champion Max.

"Champion Fine is a blend of our ryegrass with the SR 5100 chewings fescue," Lynch said. "It makes a little better playing surface because the ball sits up a little better. The fescue has a much stiffer leaf blade. It transitions very well, and you won't lose any color having the chewings in there."

"The Champion Max blend is basically for greens overseeding," said Lynch. "It has *Poa trivialis* in it, and you can take it down to a very fine mowing height. It has excellent color, is very dark green, and has a quick transition in the spring time."

### TURF SEED

Turf Seed is showcasing four new varieties this season: BrightStar SLT is a salt-tolerant ryegrass; Citation Fore which is their highest ranking perennial ryegrass in the latest National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP) trials; and two *Poa trivialis* varieties called WinterPlay and

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**SR 4500**

intendents the further South they are in the United States," said Skip Lynch, technical agronomist. "If they're in the north-

## Dormant seeding in the fall provides greater insurance against winter damage

By KEVIN ROSS

There's been a lot of talk over the past several months concerning winter damage on golf courses. High-profile events, such as the 2001 US Senior Open at Salem Country Club in Massachusetts, (which sustained severe turf loss prior to the event), has brought this issue front and center (GCN Aug. 2001).

Winter damage is not a new phenomenon. Many states throughout the northern United States and in large parts of Canada sustain turf loss every year. Each year, many superintendents experience the same agony that superintendent Kip Tyler did this year at Salem CC. However, the work done at Salem CC has spurred much thought on how to prepare your golf course for the dreaded winter months.

### THE DORMANT SOLUTION

Dormant seeding is one technique that

has not received much attention. A successful program of dormant seeding can produce spectacular results in the spring, and it is a great insurance policy in the event that any winter damage occurs.

Dormant seeding is done in the fall, after soil temperatures have declined sufficiently, so complete germination will not occur. However, soil temperatures must be sufficient for the initial stages of germination to occur.

The first step in the seed germination process is water absorption. In the second step, the seed undergoes a swelling, which initiates several biochemical and morphological events. This ultimately results in the development of a seedling turfgrass plant.

In dormant seeding, the seed undergoes

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A view of the 15th fairway at the Country Club of the Rockies in April, 2000, following the use of overwinter dormant seed.

## Pythium outbreak in the Midwest attacks turf and budgets

By JOEL JOYNER

MORRIS, Ill. — In the last part of July to mid-August here in the Midwest, a heat wave and an extended period of high humidity created ideal conditions for widespread Pythium activity. Several superintendents dealt with the "water mold" in stride after protecting their fairways, greens and tees with a fungicide preventative, but others were forced to pay for their gamble with Mother Nature.

"With the heat wave in Chicago, just about every course had Pythium," said Paul Vermeulen, director with the USGA Green Section in Mahomet, Ill. "We had about four to five weeks of hot and humid weather. There was quite a bit of Pythium in fairways and roughs."

The weather finally broke around mid-August, but before that conditions were pretty tough, said superintendent Pat Norton here at the Nettle Creek Country Club, just southwest of Chicago. "Sometimes superintendents try to save too much money, and I've been guilty of that," he said. "You try to economize a little too much and hope to fly by without getting any Pythium, and then you get hammered."

Greens and tees were treated preventively at the course and survived the outbreak. "I don't really treat fairways preventively," Norton said, "so we had a fair shot of it. I usually do some spot treatments, but this year we

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## Colorado resort relies on overseas work force

By JOEL JOYNER

KEYSTONE, Colo. — As labor shortages continued to disrupt golf course maintenance operations this past summer, the River and Ranch golf courses here turned to international recruitment with the H-2B visa program. It worked out so well that



Visa workers at Keystone, left to right, Janella Higgins, Veronica Furze, superintendent Don Petrey, Zoe Jackson, Siobhan Greathead and spray technician Jeremy Fornachien

other courses would be wise to consider bringing in visa workers for next summer, said Steve Corneillier, director of golf courses at the Keystone Resort.

"We were struggling to get enough maintenance people for a single course,"

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## Pythium

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ended up with Pythium in areas we've never seen it before. With the extreme humidity and high temperatures, it just kept popping up."

The disease, if left untreated, is capable of spreading in a matter of hours. "The ironic part of this is that after the damage occurred, we decided that we better not leave ourselves open for more damage," said Norton. "So, we did spray preventively and the weather cooled down about five days later. It felt like a damned if you do, damned if you don't situation."

### AFFORDABILITY

Norton was not alone in having to deal with the situation, according to Robert Vavrek, agronomist at the USGA Green Section in Elm Grove, Wis. "It all depended on what course budgets were like to be able to afford to spray fairways," he said. "Most superintendents had greens and tees covered, but the cost of treating 25 acres of fairways is prohibitive to some budgets."

There have been courses that haven't seen Pythium in Vavrek's region for four or five years. "It was pretty universal here this sea-

son," he said. "Once the damage occurs, it can really spread quickly. It's a disease that once superintendents see it, they'll take action."



An image of Pythium on the fairway

son," he said. "Once the damage occurs, it can really spread quickly. It's a disease that once superintendents see it, they'll take action."

"States more in the transition zone or Mid-Atlantic states probably see Pythium more often because of weather conditions," said Vavrek. "But, then again, they probably expect it and budget more for preventative treatments. They know conditions will exist year in and year out. It's not always the case here."

### HIGH HEAT INDEXES

Pythium becomes active in areas with poor air movement, valley areas or low pockets near creeks or stands of trees.

"It was on some of our greens that have tree surrounds," said Dean Whittington, superintendent at the Oak Hills Municipal Golf Course in Middlebury, Ind. "The greens out in the open weren't quite as bad. A few spots here and there, but nothing like on five or six of our problem greens."

"We had nights where the low temperature was 75 degrees and the dew point was 72 or above," explained Whittington. "The heat indexes were around 107 and 108 degrees for nearly a three week period here."

Whittington applies as little fun-

gicide as possible preventively because of the chemical budget at the course. "I try to stay ahead of Pythium and watch for it when conditions are right," he said.

It was perfect weather for Pythium, described Dave Alexander, assistant superintendent at the Highland Meadows Golf Course in Sylvania, Ohio. "We had it in some of our rough areas and green banks, but we treated all the fairways, greens and tees

preventatively."

The course treated the areas with Subdue in "two shots," once on June 1 and again on July 1, according to Alexander. "We knew it was coming, so we planned on it," he said.

### RECOVERING SOME TURF

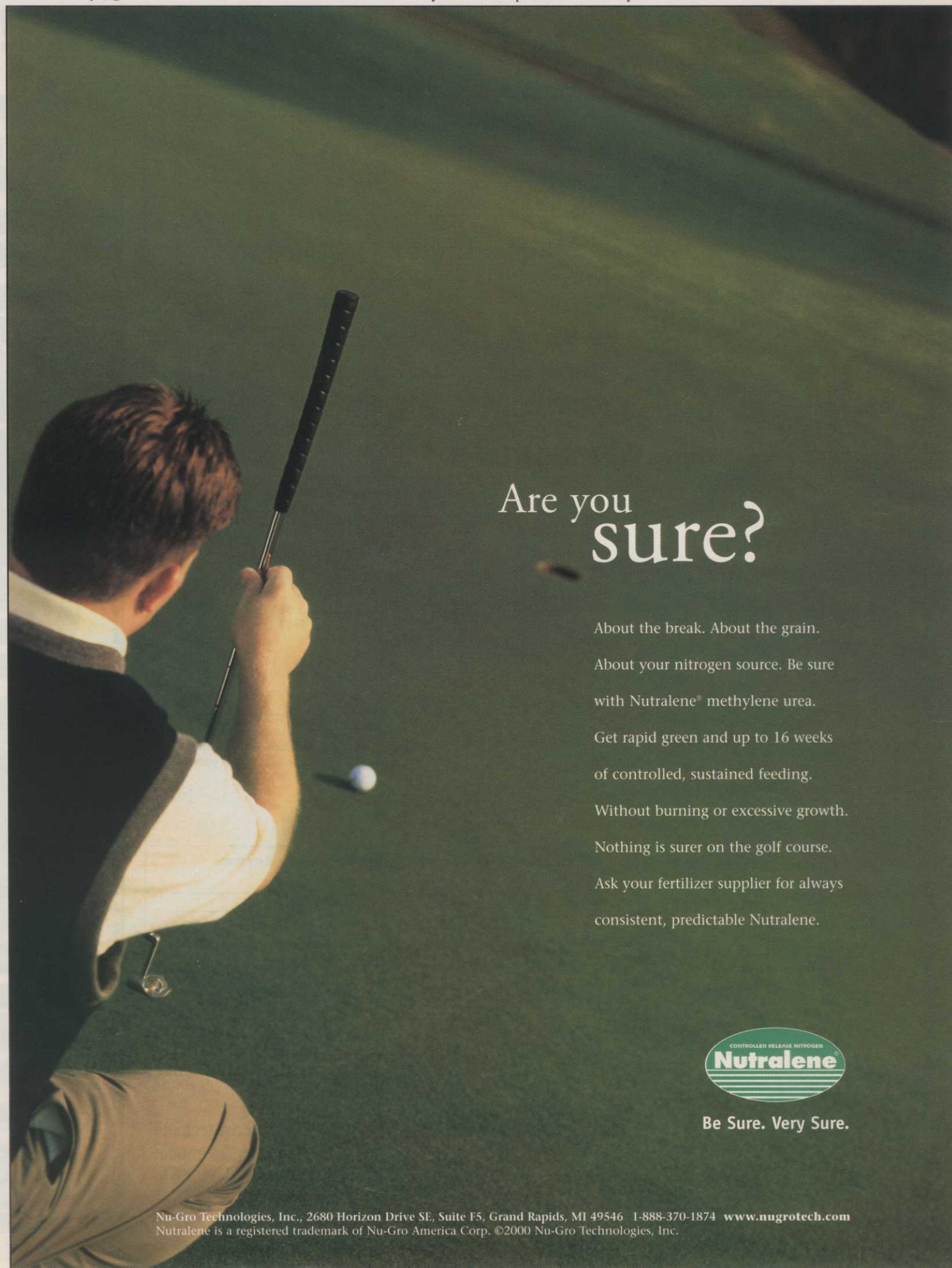
The good news for Norton is that when the heat wave broke, perfect grass growing weather followed. "I knew from my experience with our Penncross fairways

that it does a lot of filling in on its own," Norton said. "Fellow superintendents that were here for golf outings were saying, 'That turf's dead, you're going to have to reseed that area.' Sure enough, though, some places hit by Pythium started filling back in. I'll still have to oversee some of the worst hit areas."

Norton estimates that the course spent three times its normal expenditure on Pythium

chemicals this season. "We usually spend \$2,000 to \$3,000 to protect our greens, tees and problem areas," he said. "A ten-gallon container of Subdue is \$4,850 here. That's \$5,000 just to spray fairways once preventively. It's not always an easy call to make."

"It's funny, after the fact, owners will say, 'Well, you needed to spend that money,'" Norton said. "Once the damage occurs, it becomes obvious." ■



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